



## Private Water Supply

With less funding, there will be an increase in the numbers of private supplies improperly constructed and located. Subsequently, the citizens of Louisiana will experience an increased number of diseases and illnesses resulting from exposure to pathogenic organisms and chemical pollutants commonly found in contaminated water supplies. This is historically evidenced as epidemics of cholera, yellow fever, typhoid, parasitic infections, etc. Increased risks of developing certain cancers have been linked to exposures of some drinking water pollutants. More funding would best be spent on field inspectors, an up to date database with links to other state agencies, sampling and increased education of the citizens of Louisiana. Money spent in these areas would provide more bang for our buck protecting public health.

### **Objective**

The Private Water Supply Program (PWSP) ensures wells are constructed and safely located offering protection for our citizens residing in rural areas. The program works with local governments and state agencies enforcing compliance with regulations including the Sanitary Code and local ordinances.

### **Performance Indicators**

- Private supplies proposed
- Private supplies constructed
- % of structures with approved wells

### **Narrative**

The Private Water Supply Program (PWSP) permits, inspects, and monitors individual and small commercial water systems in areas of the state that have no community water supply connections available. Plan reviews and site surveys are conducted by Sanitarians at local parish health units of which there are about 230 statewide. These Sanitarians simultaneously share programmatic responsibility for several public health programs. While there is not a direct correlation of private wells to number of sewer permits issued, many of the applications for individual wastewater treatment also need the service of private wells. Sources of drinking water are directly protected by properly operating wastewater treatment systems. Sanitarians

educate property owners on the proper operation and required perpetual maintenance of their well and wastewater treatment systems. This helps to ensure the property owner knows of his responsibility to keep his family and neighbors safe and healthy through protection of the environment.

### **Better Health**

The PWSP serves citizens in La for which access to community water is unavailable. Our program meets the state goal for **Better Health** through preventative measures administered by PWSP activities as described in the narrative. Through continued **Education** of La citizens we promote a culture of personal responsibility regarding their involvement in the protection of the environment. By offering guidance for safely accessing potable water sources in areas that have no community infrastructure we promote **Diversified Economic Growth** in rural areas. With more rural development in areas with no municipal utilities, the need for individual technologies is apparent. Until all developed areas of the state are provided with community drinking water sources, the services of our program are needed. Without continued monitoring of setback distances, and regulatory activities associated with private water, more people will be adversely affected by the potential contamination of water sources.

All PWSP activities are authorized, delineated, and/or mandated by LRS 40:4(A)(6)(8) and 40:5(3)(5)(6)(9)(17)(20) as set forth in the LAC Title 51, Louisiana Public Health Sanitary Code. Additional support and guidance is followed using United States Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act. Specific measurable services provided in 2008 include 1,101 inspections of existing wells and 342 hours spent consulting with homeowners regarding water well issues. Routinely, 240 private water samples are collected annually. Additionally, recent emergency activities included collection of 1,600 private water samples after Hurricane Katrina and 200 private water samples after Hurricane Gustav. Evidence of outbreaks of cholera, typhoid and yellow fever occur in areas where there are masses of people and poor provisions for sanitation—safe drinking water sources and treatment of wastes. With the current growth rate in the state, existing population density, and climate factors, favorable conditions exist that can lead to major outbreaks if any Sanitarian services were discontinued or lessened.